

Géza G. Xeravits, Peter Porzig, *Einführung in die Qumranliteratur. Die Handschriften vom Toten Meer*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015. ISBN 978-3-11-034975-7.

This is an absolutely most welcome introduction to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls texts. Many English introductions to the Dead Sea Scrolls are broad and thematic, often for a general audience or undergraduate students. Or, at the other side of the spectrum, some major surveys such as in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (1998-1999) and the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2000) are very detailed, and in some respects already outdated. This German-language introduction (a reworking and expansion of an original Hungarian introduction), however, introduces students and scholars to the texts themselves, and in a concise factual manner to the scholarly discussion about the about one hundred texts of some substance. The authors have arranged their introduction of the texts according to the classification by content and genre that was proposed by A. Lange and U. Mittman-Richtert. Hence, after an introduction to the corpus as a whole, that deals with problems of categorisation, with genre, nomenclature, critical editions, date, and material reconstruction, the book has nine more chapters: (2) “biblical” manuscripts; (3) parabiblical texts; (4) exegetical texts; (5) rules and legal texts; (6) calendrical texts; (7) liturgical and poetic texts; (8) wisdom texts; (9) historical texts; (10) eschatological and apocalyptic texts.

Throughout these chapters, the authors give introductions to these subcorpora as a whole (e.g., giving and discussing definitions of eschatology and apocalyptic), and discuss the individual texts. Typically, the authors list editions and commentaries, and provide a bibliography. Often they list and sometimes discuss the individual manuscripts, and present — when possible — a survey of the structure and the contents of the work. But they also discuss the works themselves with reference to scholarly opinions and discussions. Occasional quotations from the works are given to illustrate the content or the discussions. In a smaller font, the authors provide discussions of a more technical detail, for example on the different readings of crucial passages. Frequently, the book offers schemes, for example of the calendrical system or the layout of the Temple according to the New Jerusalem text. Here, student and scholar alike can find the basic data on all those specific texts, which one otherwise would have to cull from various sources. But also, the authors present us with the scholarly state of the art on many of the aspects of those texts, and sometimes with their own views or assessments of scholarship. In a few sections, such as that on the exegetical texts and the historical texts, the authors offer broader discussions. Altogether the authors demonstrate a high level of competence and insight in the texts they discuss.

The book has hardly any typos or other simple errors. Of course, with so many details on one hundred or so texts, there are the inevitable occasional inaccuracies (none of which seemed absolutely crucial to me), and a few times the assessments do not seem entirely up-to-date (e.g. on the Apocryphon of Jeremiah materials). This does not distract from the fact that this introduction is by far the most up-to-date and the best scholarly one we now have. One would welcome a corrected and updated English translation.